

2024 Maine Democratic Platform

Draft

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Safeguarding Democracy

We choose democracy, and with it a solemn duty to defend the U.S. and Maine Constitutions and the rule of law against all threats, foreign and domestic.

We are committed to the same principles of freedom and liberty that have made our nation great, a place where every person can aspire to their full potential. We choose democracy to reserve power, rights, and responsibilities to the people. The beauty of American democracy is that, as a people, we form governments to build better lives and communities together.

Constitution is Supreme: We are committed to a nation in which the Constitution is the supreme law of the land. True liberty does not exist without the rule of law.

Legacy of Sacrifice: We hold in highest esteem the men and women who risked their lives to establish our nation, and who defended it against fascism, dictatorships, theocracies, and monarchies. We pledge to protect and preserve for future generations the legacy of freedom and democracy made possible by their sacrifices.

Government for All: We work to make a government for the people—for policies under which all, not just the wealthy and powerful, are able to thrive, to enjoy our human rights and freedom from oppression, and to have a voice in choosing our leaders.

Rights for People: Upholding our unalienable rights, we champion laws that prioritize the people's interests and ensure that individual and community needs are placed ahead of aspiring dictators, corporations, and Artificial Intelligence.

Secular Government: We recognize both the Constitutional free exercise of religion and the Constitutional separation of secular law from religion. We will not yield ground to subversion of these constitutional principles by religious extremists seeking theocracy.

Insurrection is Disqualifying: Insurrectionists must never hold public office. We defend the Constitution unequivocally and expect officeholders to prioritize their duties over personal interests.

Protecting Our Elections

We support safe, fair, and free elections that reflect the will of all voters equally. We reject the many ways these essential qualities of elections are under attack.

We will fight to preserve our democracy by protecting the right of every citizen to vote, to have their vote counted, and to cast their vote in fairly apportioned electoral districts. Only in a democracy can the people choose their leaders through safe, fair, and free elections. Truth matters, especially in elections, because voters deserve access to accurate news and information from trustworthy sources to help select their leaders. We will not tolerate un-American actions aimed at deceiving voters.

Defending Democracy: We unequivocally support the lawful, peaceful, and just transfer of power to duly elected leaders. It is our duty to condemn and prosecute those willing to storm the halls of Congress by force or who otherwise disrupt that transfer of power.

Universal Voting Rights: We firmly believe voting is a right for all, not a privilege for a select few. Democrats are tearing down obstacles to election participation, ensuring every citizen can contribute to shaping our future.

Rejecting Corporate Money: We oppose the Citizens United decision that allowed corporations to make unlimited campaign contributions to elections, thus legalizing influence peddling by bringing big money and dark money into our elections, and diluting the power of the individual voter. We will support laws to get corporate money out of politics and out of our elections.

Safeguarding the Right to Vote: We are committed to a secure voting process, free from intimidation and coercion, that safeguards the rights of both voters and poll workers.

Fair Electoral Districts: We will continue the fight against gerrymandering and advocate for electoral districts that guarantee fair representation for all.

Combating Misinformation: We will support laws to expose and prevent the spread of lies, misinformation, disinformation, and media manipulation that create a false perception of reality.

Women's Rights

Maine Democrats believe that women must have Constitutional rights to equality and to the freedom to make their own decisions about their reproductive rights, including the right to an abortion. We support fairness in the workplace, and freedom from discrimination, violence, and harassment.

Women's rights are human rights. Women must be able to fully exercise their political, civil, economic, social, and cultural rights. Discrimination against women, and the disadvantages suffered by women, must be eliminated at all levels. No government should interfere in a woman's decisions relating to her reproductive health, including abortion. Equal rights for women and reproductive rights, including the right to abortion, must be added to the U.S. and Maine Constitutions.

Reproductive Freedom: We believe that neither the federal nor the state government should be able to interfere in any individual's exercise of their reproductive rights, including the right to an abortion and unrestricted access to contraceptives and family planning services.

Nullifying Supreme Court Abortion Ruling: We believe that the Supreme Court decision overturning Roe vs Wade was a fundamental assault on women's rights and reproductive freedoms. We support amendments to the U.S. and Maine Constitutions to prevent governmental interference with any individual's decision relative to their own reproductive health. This includes members of the military.

Equal Rights Amendment: We refuse to accept that women do not have a constitutionally guaranteed right to equality. We support the Equal Rights Amendment being enshrined in the U.S. and Maine Constitutions to ensure that rights will not be abridged or denied on account of sex.

Elimination of Gender Pay Gaps: We believe that women must have economic justice in the workplace, must receive equal pay for equal work, and must benefit from wage transparency.

Support for Caregivers: We support increasing the availability of childcare and in-home care so that women do not have to sacrifice better jobs and careers to care for family members. We support programs to increase the pay of caregivers to attract qualified workers.

Overcoming Past Economic Disparities: We support programs to improve outcomes for older women who are disproportionately living in poverty due to a lifetime of economic disparities.

Ending Violence: We stand against violence toward women, including domestic violence, harassment, emotional violence, and verbal abuse. We support education, outreach, victim services, and law enforcement training, as well as red flag gun laws to protect women from domestic violence.

Civil Rights, Civil Liberties, and Social Justice

Civil rights and social justice are the foundation of Maine and the United States. They differentiate our political system from fascism and totalitarianism.

We champion respect, dignity, and justice, standing firm for equal rights and opportunities that strengthen Maine's social fabric. Embracing diversity and fostering active participation in society are essential for a thriving democracy

Life, Liberty, and Equality: We staunchly back Mainers in their pursuit of a life founded on liberty and equality under the law.

Racial Justice: We demand racial justice and equality.

Tribal Empowerment: We recognize the long-denied inherent right to sovereignty of Maine's Tribes.

Immigration: We welcome all new Mainers.

LGBTQIA+ Inclusivity: We affirm the right of our LGBTQIA+ communities to live openly and contribute fully to our diverse society. We continue to support marriage equality in the face of recent attacks. We support diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as education and training.

Empowering Every Ability: We uphold the Americans with Disabilities Act, which empowers Mainers with disabilities to live independently and thrive.

Freedom of Worship: We defend the right of everyone to have their own personal spiritual beliefs and to peacefully worship or congregate with others if they so choose.

Prison Reform and Rehabilitation: We endorse fair sentencing and programs other than incarceration, including restorative justice, education, and registered apprenticeships. We support programs to prevent recidivism.

Expanded Legal Representation: We recognize the need to expand affordable legal representation for vulnerable Mainers to ensure fairness and access to justice for all.

Balancing Privacy and Safety: We support laws that strike a crucial balance between ensuring privacy and preserving public safety.

Responsible Firearm Measures: We uphold Mainers' constitutional right to keep and bear arms. We support common-sense measures that respect Maine's sporting tradition while ensuring public safety and security.

Honoring Veterans

Democrats understand the vital role veterans play in shaping and protecting our nation, and we proudly stand as the party that understands their sacrifices and honors all those who put themselves in harm's way for our country.

Maine Democrats believe in action, not just words. We consistently fight for the well-being of our veterans, recognizing that their dedication to our country deserves unwavering support. Maine has the fourth highest number of veterans per capita in the United States. Veterans are teachers, business owners, police officers, firefighters, doctors, nurses, post-workers, our siblings, our parents, our children, veterans are our family, and we will always look out for family.

Accessible Healthcare: Veterans have a multitude of unique health needs and concerns. We advocate for comprehensive, accessible physical and mental healthcare services, ensuring veterans receive the medical attention they deserve without unnecessary delays.

Veteran Employment: We support programs that connect veterans with meaningful job opportunities that leverage their skills and expertise in the workforce. It is our responsibility to assist veterans with the often-difficult transition into new civilian careers.

Mental Health Support: Seventeen veterans commit suicide every day. We must prioritize quality, accessible mental health services and work tirelessly to remove the stigma and help them heal from the trauma and mental injuries that they came home with. We must do better.

Veteran Education Benefits: No veteran should be denied furthering their education. We commit to expanding educational opportunities, ensuring they have the resources to pursue their dreams beyond the military.

Veteran Housing Assistance: We believe veterans should have more opportunities to own a home in Maine. We actively support programs that provide affordable housing options and assistance for those who served and will continue to serve as honorable leaders in our communities.

Veteran Community Integration: We promote initiatives that foster veterans' seamless integration into their communities and recognize the diverse strengths they bring to our

neighborhoods. We strive to expand veteran networking groups in order to help veterans connect with each other outside the military.

Ending Veteran Homelessness: No veteran should be homeless. We are dedicated to eradicating veteran homelessness by implementing targeted strategies and support systems to ensure every veteran has a secure and stable place to call home.

Older Mainers

We believe our older population is a valuable resource that should not be discriminated against and should be supported in healthy aging.

Maine Democrats value the knowledge, experience, wisdom, and active volunteerism of older Mainers. We stand in favor of promoting healthy aging and empowerment of older Mainers and we oppose age discrimination.

Age Positivity: We support an age-positive, anti-ageist culture in Maine.

Enacting Anti-Discrimination Laws: We support enacting laws and policies that promote healthy aging and prohibit discrimination based on age.

Empowering Older Workers: We support laws and policies that provide for hiring and retention of older workers, recognizing the value and experience they bring to the workforce.

Aging in Place: We support comprehensive programs, including repairs, heating assistance, meal delivery, and in-home care, to ensure older Mainers can choose to comfortably age-in-place.

Protecting Social Security and Medicare: We support fully funding Social Security and Medicare and lowering drug costs. We oppose any reductions in benefits.

Healthcare

Maine Democrats believe that quality healthcare for all must be timely, accessible, and affordable regardless of where one lives.

We believe in a universal health care system that includes comprehensive and quality care that is affordable for every Mainer. We support gender affirming care and public health services that bring health care to where it is needed. We believe in putting people's health before profit.

Universal Health Care: We believe in a universal health care system so that monies will be spent on the health needs of patients and not on the complex administrations of insurance companies and the salaries of their executives.

Comprehensive Coverage: We believe that quality healthcare must always be universally affordable, equitable, easily accessible, and timely, must include vision, hearing, dental, mental health, preventive treatment, and care for substance-use disorder. We believe coverage of injuries and illnesses, including state of the art treatments, should be available to all, and not only to those who have better health care coverage or more money.

Gender Affirming Care: We support gender affirming health care.

Family Services: We believe that prenatal and postnatal programs, family planning — including IVF services, counseling, and other assistance must be provided to promote the well-being of all families.

Rural Access: We support increasing the availability of full healthcare services to rural Mainers to address the unique challenges faced by these communities.

Investing in Health Careers: We support underwriting health careers in Maine to increase the number of skilled health care providers in the state.

Public Health Expansion: We believe in expanding public health policies and developing resources designed to reduce morbidity and mortality across the state.

Environmental Health for Well-Being: We believe that to protect our health we also must protect our land, sea, and air from environmental degradation.

Housing and Affordability

Safe and affordable housing is a fundamental human right.

The winters of Maine are dangerous for those without a home. Without housing, many Mainers are at risk of dying from the cold. As Democrats, we find this inhumane and unacceptable. We will work to achieve a vision of guaranteeing no Mainer will die from a lack of secure, safe, and affordable housing.

Affordable Housing Development: We advocate for accelerated funding of affordable home construction built with meaningful labor standards. Currently, 84,000 Maine families either lack adequate housing or have no housing at all.

Rural Housing Solutions: To resolve the housing crisis, we support investment, repair, transportation options, and new development, especially in the outskirts of Maine towns.

Tenant Protections: We will work to stabilize Maine's housing economy. We will protect Mainers from extreme rent increases and protect tenants from unfair treatment and unfair eviction.

Homelessness Prevention: We support the Housing First model and advocate for its growth in Maine. Housing First offers housing for people who struggle economically. We take inspiration from Finland's successful nationalized model that virtually eliminated homelessness.

Homeownership Support: We must encourage a young workforce to invest in our beautiful state. Developing down-payment assistance programs and incentivizing affordable mortgages are essential to growing our labor force.

Sustainable Development: We are faced with a radically changing climate, and we must use innovative ideas and technologies to encourage green building and mixed-use projects, blending affordability with environmental consciousness such as biodegradable 3-D printed buildings.

Equitable Zoning: We support inclusive and diverse zoning policies to prevent unintended gentrification, so Mainers can live and raise their families where they work.

Home Repair and Heating Assistance: We strive to protect Mainers from financial catastrophes that can lead to unsafe and insecure housing. Financial aid programs for repairs and heat are necessary for low-income Mainers.

Housing for Disabled Mainers: We support access to housing for disabled individuals as it is crucial for fostering inclusivity and autonomy. By prioritizing features like wheelchair accessibility, driveway access, and affordability, we ensure that disabled Mainers can live independently with dignity and equal opportunities.

Labor, Workforce, and a High-Road Economy

A strong and diverse Maine workforce with access to quality training, dignified and safe working conditions, and fair compensation, with the ability to impact all three through a united voice, is critical for employers to attract and retain the talent needed to thrive and grow.

Maine must foster a high-road economy. Responsive and respectful employers who ensure safe workplaces, pay fair wages with benefits, provide meaningful job training, and support their employees' free and fair choice to form a labor union, create an environment where Maine workers are invested in their employers' success. By growing from the bottom up and the middle out, a high-road economy creates hundreds of thousands of individual economic engines that power local economies and build a stronger Maine.

Right to Organize: We defend every worker's right to join or form a union and to participate in union activities without fear of harassment or retaliation.

Rejecting "Right to Work" Laws: We oppose the establishment of devastating "Right to Work" laws, which strip workers of their rights and their voice.

Ensuring Equitable Wages: We insist on equal pay for equal work. Everyone deserves to work with dignity and to earn fair wages and benefits, regardless of age, gender, ability, industry, or sector. Employers who ignore these principles and violate labor laws must be met with swift and robust enforcement and meaningful penalties.

Inclusivity in the Workplace: We must ensure our workforce reflects our communities. By being responsive to the needs of women, the LGBTQIA+ community, people of color, the immigrant community, justice-involved Mainers, and those navigating substance-use disorder, we will continue to break down arbitrary, short-sighted, barriers and emphasize how diversity's unique and impactful contributions are critical to Maine's future.

Right to Strike: Maine workers across all industries and sectors, including public employees, must have the right to strike as a means to protest hazardous conditions, inadequate pay, unacceptable benefits, and unfair treatment based on who they are, how old they are, who they love, or how they live.

Iconic Industries and Economic Advancement: We reject the belief that economic advancement and the growth of new industries inevitably and negatively impact working

Mainers. As our economy grows, we must thoughtfully preserve Maine's small business culture and protect our multi-generational livelihoods.

Building Communities, Building Maine: We strongly support the use of project labor agreements, community benefits agreements, and employer-employee harmony agreements so that all Mainers can share in the fruits of economic activity.

Managing Automation: As automation and Artificial Intelligence grow, we will ensure working Mainers are never treated as expendable. Nothing can substitute for a Mainer's judgment and work ethic. We will fight to preserve our shared value that "an honest day's work deserves an honest day's pay."

Lifelong Education and the Development of Vibrant Communities

Democracy depends upon a high-quality, accessible, and effective system of lifelong education.

Building a strong democracy requires educated and engaged communities. It starts with accessible education for all children, ensuring their readiness to learn. It includes informed parenting, fully-resourced schools, accessible trade and college programs, and continuous support for adults advancing their careers and engaging in lifelong learning while finding ways to further the wellbeing of their communities.

Educational Facilities: We support safe, inclusive schools and other learning spaces free from violence, discrimination, and public health risks.

Curriculum: We require comprehensive teaching and discussion of all subjects in a course of study guided by informed educators and uncorrupted by political agendas.

Staff: We depend upon a respected and dynamic workforce trained in best practices for childcare, early education, and rigorous pedagogy.

Civics: We recommend full integration of civics education into the curriculum along with study of the attributes of healthy, vibrant communities.

Financial Sustainability: We demand strong hourly wages, competitive salaries, and robust benefits for all educators, support services personnel, librarians, and early childcare providers.

Nutrition: We require that all students continue to have universal free access to healthy meals from pre-K through secondary education.

Supplemental Facilities: We recognize that not only students but all Mainers benefit from free access to, and support for, libraries and librarians, as well as educational community spaces.

Natural Environment: We emphasize the value of Maine as a resource for learning and leisure throughout the lifespan.

Technology: We urge expanded broadband access for students and Mainers of all ages to expand their knowledge of technological advancements and information literacy. We endorse instruction on the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence.

Living with a Changing Climate

Maine faces a critical challenge in combating climate change, which threatens our natural and built environment, our economy, our workforce, and our lifestyles. As stewards of this beautiful state, we are committed to action.

Climate change is an existential threat to Mainers. Our quality of life depends on our abundant resources and critical infrastructure. Changing weather is increasing storm damage and impacting agriculture and natural ecosystems. The Gulf of Maine is warming rapidly. Changing climate will impact many aspects of our lives: jobs, food supply, infrastructure, and resource-based industries. We must develop and implement strategies to address climate change while protecting our workforce and economy.

Maine Won't Wait: We support the implementation, regular review, and continuous improvement of Maine's Climate Action Plan, "Maine Won't Wait".

Green Energy Expansion: We must rapidly expand green energy and enhance energy efficiency. We must ensure equitable policies so that all Mainers have access to green energy and the associated new, well-paying jobs, as we make the changes needed to meet Maine's climate action goals.

Jobs for the Future: As we address climate change, we must do so while meeting strict labor standards and establishing a just transition for our current energy workforce.

Sustainable Resource Management: Managing Maine's natural and agriculture ecosystems to enhance carbon uptake is critical for achieving carbon neutrality. We also recognize the important role of carbon storage in wood products.

Marine Resources: To ensure resilience as Maine's ocean warms, we must foster collaboration with the fishing industry as fishing grounds shift and new marine sector opportunities like seaweed and shellfish farming expand.

Transportation Transformation: Transportation is a major contributor to Maine's greenhouse gas emissions. We advocate for multi-modal transportation access and widespread electrification, including a robust network of vehicle charging stations, bicycle lanes, preserving rail corridors, and expanding passenger rail service.

Education for Transition: We believe education and training are essential to a successful and just transition. We must integrate climate change impacts and solutions into school curricula through classroom and outdoor education. We must also provide targeted job training for communities, businesses, and workers.

Energy for the Future

A just transition to clean energy and reduction of energy needs through increased efficiency are essential and will benefit Maine's economy and our environment.

A clean energy transition has already begun that will be as profound as the Industrial Revolution. The high cost and price volatility of fossil fuels place a tremendous burden on Maine households and businesses. We must enhance Maine's electrical grid while greatly reducing fossil fuel use. Maine has tremendous potential for diverse green energy production. We envision a future where our state becomes a beacon of energy independence through a just transition to locally-built green electricity infrastructure.

Diverse Green Energy Sources: We support diversification of green energy production from solar, wind, and water. Diversification will minimize the impact of fluctuating grid demands and reduce the need for battery storage.

Energy Independence: We will develop a resilient, just, and cost-effective transition to green energy that ensures Maine's energy independence. To accomplish this we need an upgraded grid that is designed for dispersed clean energy generation and increased electricity demand.

Opportunities in Green Energy: We are committed to managing the shift to green energy collaboratively and equitably, so it will ensure well-paying jobs and provide lower energy costs for consumers. This transition will ultimately benefit our environment, businesses, workers, and economy. Supplying excess energy to neighboring regions can strengthen our economy without compromising our environment and values.

Incentives for Transition: We support expansion of financial incentives from the state of Maine and the federal government. Such programs offset costs for green appliances, energy generation, and efficiency improvements, making these changes accessible, especially for low-income Mainers.

Responsible Siting for Sustainability: We support siting of green energy infrastructure to minimize impact on marine ecosystems and other natural resources, while benefiting communities. Together, we will build a sustainable energy future for Maine.

Protecting Maine's Natural Resources

Maintaining the health of Maine's natural resources is vital to our economic sustainability and quality of life.

Maine's abundant and treasured natural resources are vital to our economic sustainability, quality of life, and the well-being of future generations. As climate warms, it alters weather patterns, causing migration of native and invasive plant and animal species and diseases. Both changes disrupt our farms, forests, wetlands, and marine ecosystems. Warming in the Gulf of Maine threatens our fisheries. Extreme storms threaten infrastructure in coastal and inland areas. We must manage Maine's resources to increase resilience to changing weather patterns. This will further contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation.

Economic Health: Our vital industries—forestry, fisheries, food, and tourism—depend on a healthy environment. Mainers deserve to thrive in ecosystems that sustain us.

Resource Conservation: We must conserve and protect our air, water, and land while maintaining biodiversity and healthy ecosystems, which currently absorb about 75 percent of Maine's greenhouse gas emissions.

Supporting Fisheries: We must maintain the vitality of Maine's iconic fishing industry as it navigates changes in fish, lobster, and shellfish populations wrought by changing climate.

Sustainable Agriculture: We embrace local, small-scale farming that is managed to enhance soil health, productivity, and carbon storage.

Adapting to Change: We support monitoring and adaptive management of agriculture, forestry, wetland, and aquatic resources to address the challenges of changing weather patterns and movement of plant species, insects, and diseases.

Protection from Storm Damage: We must urgently develop and implement plans and actions to shield coastal and inland communities from rising seas, storm surge, high winds, extreme flooding, and erosion.

Community Revitalization: To sustain and invigorate local communities, we need to create new well-paying jobs rooted in Maine's traditions—trades, crafts, working waterfronts, forestry, small farms, and tourism.